

Maryland Department of Labor, Licensing & Regulation

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Larry Hogan, Governor – Boyd K. Rutherford, Lt. Governor – Kelly M. Schulz, Secretary

****FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE****

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Independent Electrical Contractors Chesapeake Joins Maryland Apprenticeship Ambassador Program

IEC program shows increased opportunities for youth

BALTIMORE (June 5, 2018) – Maryland Labor Secretary Kelly M. Schulz today welcomed the Independent Electrical Contractors Chesapeake (IEC) to the Maryland Apprenticeship Ambassador Program. The IEC, a registered apprenticeship sponsor since 1982 and a leader in developing youth apprenticeship opportunities, joins the state's incentive program to help raise awareness about registered apprenticeship.

"IEC Chesapeake's demonstrated leadership in preparing Maryland's workforce for good-paying, secure jobs – especially for our next generation of workers through youth apprenticeship – makes them a perfect fit for the ambassador program," said Secretary Schulz. "Their innovation, passion, and flexibility will help us attract more talent of all ages and backgrounds to one of the fastest growing occupations in construction and help grow Maryland's economy by filling in-demand jobs."

Apprenticeship ambassadors voluntarily cultivate and strengthen relationships with key stakeholders, encouraging job seekers and businesses to engage in apprenticeship opportunities. For their commitment, ambassadors receive special recognition from the Maryland Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation, customized advice and counsel on navigating the Maryland Apprenticeship and Training Program, the latest in apprenticeship news and emerging workforce trends, and valuable media exposure.

The presentation was made to IEC Executive Director Grant Shmelzer during IEC's graduation ceremony for the Pathways to Success Electrical Pre-Apprenticeship Program. Thirteen high school students completed a rigorous 200-hour electrical trade program that included a combination of hands-on training and classroom instruction. The program is in partnership with the Maryland Department of Labor, Howard County Office of Workforce Development, and the Howard County Public School System.

"With a growing shortage of qualified electrical workers, it has never been a better time to join the electrical industry," said Shmelzer. "There are plenty of job opportunities available and electricians are among the highest paid jobs in the construction sector. We are looking forward to continuing to spread that message while serving as an apprenticeship ambassador."



Shmelzer serves as chair of the Maryland Youth Apprenticeship Advisory Committee and is a member of the Maryland Apprenticeship and Training Council. Over the past 36 years, 832 electrical and telecomm apprentices have completed IEC apprenticeship training. Today, 713 apprentices are in its registered apprenticeship programs.

All 13 pre-apprenticeship graduates have applied to the IEC's four-year registered apprenticeship program and are expected to be placed in full-time jobs with local employers such as the National Security Agency, Hawkins Electric Service, and Modern Lighting.

"This being the first year of the program, we weren't sure what to expect, but the results have been extraordinary," said Howard County Public School Resource Teacher Stephanie Discepolo. "Across the board, we saw improvement in the students' GPAs, indicating an increase in motivation and engagement in learning. The program provided a positive, supportive environment to develop workplace skills and a sense of purpose. This program has filled a critical need for students who did not otherwise have a post-graduation career plan."

Since the beginning of the Hogan administration in January 2015, the number of registered apprentices has grown by nearly 20 percent. Today, approximately 9,600 apprentices are learning and earning throughout Maryland. In 2017, a total of 15 new registered apprenticeship programs were created and seven were re-activated, resulting in a record year for the program.

Apprenticeships are full-time careers that include on-the-job training and classroom instruction, allowing apprentices to earn while they learn. Anyone 18 or older can be a registered apprentice, and high school students can pursue youth apprenticeships. Businesses and job seekers interested in apprenticeships are invited to contact info@mdapprenticeship.com or call 410-767-2246.

About the Maryland Department of Labor

The Maryland Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation (DLLR) is committed to safeguarding and protecting Marylanders. We're proud to support the economic stability of the state by providing businesses, the workforce, and the consuming public with high-quality, customer-focused regulatory, employment, and training services. For updates and information, follow DLLR on [Twitter \(@MD_DLLR\)](#), and [Facebook](#), and visit our [website](#).

About Independent Electrical Contractors Chesapeake

IEC Chesapeake is the Mid-Atlantic chapter of the Independent Electrical Contractors (IEC), Inc., the industry's premier national trade association. Founded in 1957 as the Associated Independent Electrical Contractors of America, IEC is a trade association of approximately 3,700 member companies, 90,000 electrical workers, and over 10,000 apprentices in nearly 60 chapters throughout the U.S. Its mission is to develop and foster a stronger economy through the level of quality and services its members provide to the industry.

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